**Read about Responsiveness**

Section 4 Read about responsiveness Setting the Stage for Children’s Talk pt. 2

A teacher who is attentive to children's verbal signals and nonverbal gestures (body language) is not only setting the stage by creating a "comfort zone" in which children feel inclined to talk but is also gathering information that will allow the teacher to respond quickly and effectively to children's ever-changing language needs.

**Questioning Strategies**

Broad, open-ended questions are designed to help children think both critically and creatively, and generally include who, what, where, when, why, and how questions. To answer open-ended questions, children must describe, think, compare, and use rich vocabulary.

Since most classroom activities have a question and answer component, there is ample opportunity to practice posing open-ended questions—questions that elicit more than just one- or two-word responses. After a bit of practice, most teachers find that open-ended questioning becomes second nature.

Here are some examples of open-ended questions, and lines of questioning:

•What can you tell me about this? What else can you tell me?

•How does that make you feel?

•What did you see that was different [or the same]?

•When you did that, what did you do first? Next? Last?

•Why did you do it like that?

•Tell me about this object? How could you use this object?

**Attention**

Children, like adults, generally feel more inclined to talk when the person they are talking to seems attentive and interested. When you engage children in talk, keep in mind the basic techniques of good listening:

•Face the child.

•Maintain eye contact.

•Encourage the child with appropriate signals (e.g., head nods, head shakes, "uh- huhs," etc.).

•Note and respond to body language that indicates a shift in interest or mood (e.g., gaze averted, frown, head hung, etc.)

**Responsiveness**

Teachers can encourage children to express themselves more fully by:

•Paraphrasing (briefly restating) the child's words to confirm meaning.

•Asking questions that prompt critical and creative answers.

•Asking questions that gently probe for information/meaning (without putting children on the spot).

•Leaving plenty of time for the child to respond to questions.

**Modeling**

By listening to children with interest and respect and giving them feedback that values and validates their speech, teachers model social behaviors. Children learn behavior by example. By following your lead, they will emulate good listening and speak well with others. When teachers complement these models with activities that reinforce taking turns and the courtesies and conventions of speech, or social scripts," they give children the foundation they need to use oral language effectively and nicely—to hear and be heard.